



Chapter

10

Litter Control

Litter Control in the City of Falls Church

Litter control helps ensure that items such as paper, plastics, glass, metal objects, building materials, discarded food items, cigarette butts, rubber scraps, and other items are properly disposed. The primary goals of most litter control programs are to improve the image and appearance of the community and to safeguard public health and safety through environmental protection.

Current Litter Control Programs

City of Falls Church

The Recycling Coordinator manages all litter control programs in the City of Falls Church, with assistance from the Environmental Services Council (ESC) Cleanup Task Group. Litter control programs in the City of Falls Church include bi-annual citywide cleanups, “Adopt-a-Spot” litter pickup program, “City Walk” program, Stream Stewards program, removal of abandoned vehicles, and street sweeping.

Bi-Annual Citywide Cleanups



The City of Falls Church Department of Environmental Services and the ESC sponsor Spring and Fall Citywide Cleanups that typically involve 100 to 150 volunteers. Volunteers are organized into teams that are assigned to work areas, primarily commercial streets, parks, and streams. Approximately one ton of litter is collected at each Citywide Cleanup—one-third of which is recyclable cans and bottles that are separated for recycling. A “thank you” picnic for volunteers is held immediately following a morning of litter pickup. The ESC Cleanup Task Group, which is staffed by the City’s Recycling Coordinator, assists

with the organization, implementation, and evaluation of each Spring and Fall Cleanup.

Adopt-a-Spot Program

The Adopt-a-Spot program provides an opportunity for residents, businesses, and civic groups to pick up litter in designated areas, including parks, streets, and school grounds. Thirty groups currently participate in the Adopt-a-Spot litter pickup program. The “adopting” groups agree to pick up litter four times a year for two years. In return, the City of Falls Church provides trash bags, vests, safety information, and signs that recognize the group’s contribution. All City parks, most commercial streets, and most school grounds are covered through the Adopt-a-Spot program. The ESC Cleanup Task Group assists the City’s Recycling Coordinator with the organization, implementation, and evaluation of the Adopt-a-Spot program.

City Walk Program

City Walk is a one-hour historic tour and litter pickup held the third Saturday morning of every month, except October and April when Citywide Cleanups are held. Each walk covers a different area of Falls Church and often includes commentary from long-time City residents. Each year, the City Walk program features a special theme. Past themes have included historic homes, hills and valleys, specimen trees, sustainability, pathways, and the hidden streams of Falls Church. Participants are provided with litter bags and E-Z Reacher litter pickup tools. Average attendance on each City Walk is 12 to 15 participants. The Recycling Coordinator manages and leads the City Walk program.

Stream Stewards Program

The City of Falls Church Stream Stewards are volunteer citizen advocates helping to educate other citizens on how to improve water quality in our streams. The goal of the group is to make our urban streams fishable and swimmable, as they were less than 100 years ago. In addition to making presentations to schools and civic organizations, the Stream Stewards assist with the application of plastic decals next to every storm drain in the City of Falls Church. These plastic decals declare, “Don’t Dump – Drains to Four Mile Run (or Tripps Run),” educating citizens to the fact that anything thrown down the storm drain (e.g., litter, dog poop, oil, etc.) ends up, untreated, in our streams. The Recycling Coordinator manages and leads the Stream Stewards program.



Abandoned Vehicle Removal

The City Police Department arranges for towing companies to remove inoperable vehicles from public property, and the Zoning Division arranges for the removal of inoperable vehicles from private property.

These vehicles are then either reclaimed by their owners or sold at auction.

Street Sweeping

The City of Falls Church contracts for street sweeping services throughout the City. The purpose of street sweeping is to prevent litter and particulate matter from entering storm drains, local streams, the Potomac River, and Chesapeake Bay and to create safer, more attractive roadways.

Civil Penalties Program

The City’s Recycling Coordinator has the authority to issue tickets for Solid Waste Code violations, such as accumulation of litter and debris. Under the Civil Penalties Program, a “warning” ticket identifies a violation and establishes a specific number of days in which the violation must be corrected. If the violation is not corrected by the established deadline, then a monetary ticket is issued. The first monetary ticket is \$100. Each additional ticket is \$150, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per violation.

Future Litter Control Programs

The City of Falls Church plans to continue the current litter control programs over the SWMP planning period to ensure that items are properly disposed. In addition, the City plans to increase the effectiveness of street sweeping and increase efforts to prevent illegal dumping.

Table 10-1 shows the City’s SWMP actions for litter control. These SWMP actions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.

Table 10-1. City of Falls Church Litter Control SWMP Actions

Litter Control SWMP Actions	
–	Maintain the current litter control program
–	Increase effectiveness of street sweeping
–	Increase efforts to prevent illegal dumping